DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 406 796 EC 305 498

AUTHOR Schultze, Betty R.; Dice, Marvin L.

TITLE Training Students from the Caribbean and Central America as Special Education Teachers.

PUB DATE Apr 96

NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Council for Exceptional Children (74th, Orlando, FL, April 1-5, 1996).

PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS Change Agents; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Latin Americans; *Preservice Teacher Education; Program Design; Program Effectiveness; *Special Education Teachers; *Teacher Certification; Teacher Recruitment; Teacher Supply and Demand

IDENTIFIERS *Caribbean; *Central America; Georgetown University DC

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the results of a two-year program to train 25 students from countries in Central America and the Caribbean in the area of special education. The program was administered by Georgetown University's Center for Intercultural Development (Washington, D.C.) and funded by the United States Agency of International Development. Specific information about disabilities and the lack of special education in the Caribbean and Central American countries is provided; the need for special education teachers is also discussed. The purposes of the program, student recruitment and selection, and the program's administrative structure are also reviewed. The need for students to become change agents in their countries and communities is noted. The paper also describes the training the students received and the activities that were provided for the students to help them experience the United States. (CR)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 406 796

Putting MAGIC into LEARNING

TRAINING STUDENTS FROM THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA AS SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Presented by:

Betty R. Schultze, Ed.D.

&

Marvin L. Dice, Ph.D.

Harris-Stowe State College
Teacher Education Department
3026 Laclede Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63103

Telephone #: 314-340-3661
Fax#: 314-340-3690

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M.L. Dice

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

EC305498

THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
"PUTTING MAGIC INTO LEARNING"
ORLANDO, FLORIDA,
APRIL 1-5, 1996

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TRAINING STUDENTS FROM THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA AS SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Presented at the 1996 CEC Annual Convention, Orlando, FL

By:
Betty R. Schultze, Ed.D. and Marvin L. Dice, Ph.D.
Harris-Stowe State College
St. Louis, MO

Introduction

In the Spring, 1992, the Teacher Education Department of Harris-Stowe State College located in St. Louis, MO received notification that they had been selected to implement a two-year program in conjunction with The St. Louis Community College at the Forest Park Campus, St. Louis, MO, to train twenty-five students, twenty-four of whom were women, from countries in Central America and the Caribbean in the area of special education. This program was administered by Georgetown University's Center for Intercultural Development (CIED) and funded by the United States Agency of International Development (USAID). Georgetown University Center for Intercultural Development is often referred to as the CASS program, an acronym for Cooperative Association of States for Scholarships. The CASS, or CIED, program is managed in cooperation with the Latin American and Caribbean Bureau of the United States Agency for International Development. The countries represented among the twenty-five students were Guatemala, Dominica, St. Vincent and The Genadines, Honduras, Costa Rica, Belize, Barbados, El Salvador, St. Kitts and Nevis, Nicaragua, Jamaica, and Grenada.

Harris-Stowe State College, a historically Black college, has a history of training culturally diverse populations and the theme for the teacher education program is "Teachers for a Diverse Society". In 1992,

a member of the special education faculty attended Dr. Peter Mittler's distinguished lecturer session entitled International Visions of Excellence for Children with Disabilities at the CEC Annual Convention. Dr. Mittler's vision of excellence included setting a greater priority for prevention of disabilities, early identification and intervention to help children and support families, developing a closer partnership with parents, integrating children with disabilities into the local school and community, providing relevant preparation for adult life and participation in the community, and giving individuals with disabilities more opportunity for decision making and exercising more control over their own lives and environments (Mittler, 1992). The CASS students frequently identified these same aspirations for those with disabilities in their individual countries.

To place the need for training of teachers in these and other countries in perspective, it has been estimated that the number of disabled people in the world is likely to rise from 500 million in 1990 to well over 600 million by the end of the century, that some 140 million children--or one child in 10 in the world as a whole--has a significant disability and that one family in four is affected by disability in one way or another, and of these 21 million children, 127 million live in developing countries--88 million in Asia, 18 million in Africa, 13 million in Latin America, with 11 million living in Europe, and six million in North America.

Specific to Latin American and Caribbean countries, only about two percent of disabled persons receive rehabilitative services. These programs are frequently sponsored by private or semi-private organizations and by agencies such as UNICEF and the Peace Corps with

MITTLER'S VISION OF EXCELLENCE

1. Greater priority for prevention of disabilities.

2. Early identification and intervention.

3. Developing a closer partnership with parents.

4. Integrating children with disabilities into the local school and community.

5. Providing relevant preparation for adult life and participation in the community.

6. Giving individuals with disabilities more opportunity for decision making and exercising more control over their own lives and environments. (Mittler, 1992, p.1)

SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT DISABILITIES AND SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE CARIBBEAN & CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES

1. Only about 2% of disabled persons in these countries are receiving rehabilitative services.

2. Special education programs are frequently sponsored by private or semi-private organizations and by agencies such as UNICEF and the Peace Corps; only a limited number of public school special education programs are available.

3. Teacher shortages owing to a lack of teacher training are critical.

4. Families lack information regarding disabling conditions and their beliefs are frequently based on superstitions.

5. The few services that are available to disabled children are usually located in capital cities with services available in rural areas very limited.

6. Because of cultural and religious beliefs, many families conceal their disabled children from society which limits effective child find efforts.

7. Many countries are battling with compulsory regular education and the issue of special education is extremely low (Correa, 1987).

limited public school programs available and services that are available usually located in capital cities,. Teacher training in special education is critical, there is a lack of information regarding disabling conditions, child find efforts are difficult as disabled children are concealed by the families, and many countries are battling compulsory regular education, so the issue of special education is not a priority (Correa, 1987).

Purposes of the CASS Program

According to the "CASS: Training Impact and Development Report for 1992-1994" (CIED, 1992-1994), the broad purposes of this program were:

1. to provide opportunities for socially and economically disadantaged Central American and Caribbean youth to acquire training needed in their countries;
2. to encourage CASS students to pursue higher levels of academic training upon returning home, and
3. to develop lasting links of friendships in the United States.

Specific program elements were the recruitment of disadvantaged youth, training in areas of need, encouragement for further education upon returning home, linkage with the United States, and follow-on aimed toward employability and leadership.

Student Recruitment and Selection

The CASS effort to recruit eligible candidates was nationwide in these countries. The criteria for selection called for being between the ages of 17-25 with limited personal and family financial resources within a targeted disadvantage range, demonstrated abilities

in leadership and community involvement, a high school graduate or enrolled in the final year of high school and be academically above average, without a post secondary degree or university experience, must be unmarried and without children, cannot have siblings who received a CASS scholarship, and 50% must be women. Recruitment included newspaper announcements and radio broadcasts, informal CASS alumni networks, principals of schools, and the Office of the Ministry of Education.

The selection process involved several stages. The CASS in-country staff screened initial candidates and the qualifying candidates were invited to participate in personal interviews which address motivation and interest in the field of study, ability to communicate and adapt, willingness to participate in cross-cultural exchange, leadership abilities, and commitment to their country and their community. The final list of candidates were brought to Washington, D.C. and were decided upon at a joint meeting made up of the participating colleges/universities, CASS staff, and USAID/Washington. The CASS Georgetown University program in turn informed the regional in-country coordinators of those who had been selected.

Administrative Structure

CASS is administered by Georgetown University's CIED director and an associate director. It is organized into an Overseas and U.S. Operations. Three regional coordinators serve as primary contacts between CASS/GU and the in-county coordinators, each responsible for four for countries. Country coordinators are responsible for identifying country-appropriate fields of study, establishment of a support network from the private sector and government

representatives, and the implementation of the CASS program following the priorities set by Georgetown.

The Change Agent Concept

In addition to the training and acquisition of knowledge, an equally important function of the CASS progam is to teach skills in the area of leadership. As change agents in their respective countries and communities, they are to be able to apply their training in the workplace even against obstacles and share their training with their co-workes, formulate and initiate improved procedures in the workplace, share their training beyond the work place such as in the community or volunteer organizations, and be prepared to participate as citizens in the democratic process in each of their countries.

United States Training

The CASS training program included English language training for the Spanish speakers, course work in special education, and the Experience America component. The English language training had as its goal to teach English as rapidly as possible. The St. Louis Community College at the Forest Park Campus has developed considerable expertise in English as a Second Language and possesses an extensive audio-visual language facility. There were also workshops in human relations and group dynamics, and computer education in word processing.

After one semester at the Forest Park Campus, the CASS scholars were relocated at Harris-Stowe State College to pursue training in provide the CASS scholars with special education programs equal to special education. The goal of the program at this stage was to

that required by the State of Missouri to certify teachers in the areas of mentally handicapped, behaviorally disordeed, learning disabilities, and physically/health impaired. The students were to select three of the four areas of study and cousework included (a) foundations of teaching, (b) methods of teaching, (c) clinical experiences, and (d) special seminars in proposal writing, preparing presentations, visiting educational settings, and guest speakers. The CASS scholars were integrated with America students in all of their course work except for the special seminars.

Experience America

To foster and strengthen relationships between people of the United States and the Latin American countries, Experience America activities were scheduled throughout their stay in the United States. Some of the activities were participation in the Black history program, a visit to Mark Twain's home in Hannibal, MO, a visit to the Life Skills Foundation, a trip to the Cahokia Mounds in Cahokia, IL, a trip to Atlanta, GA and the Martin Luther King Exhibit, and numerous appearances at community functions. In addition, skiing, sledding, and ice skating were enjoyed by the students as was the Soulard Mardi Gras celebration held in the Soulard neighborhood and market area. All of the students attended the Missouri Federation Conference held in St. Louis and made a presentation about special education in their countries, while four students attended the National CEC Convention held in Denver, CO.

Conclusion

Upon completion of approximately sixty-five hours in special

education, participating in community and college activities, attending leadership seminars conducted by CASS/GU, presenting at a Federation conference, and preparing a paper for ERIC on special education in their respective countries from their perspective, this group of twenty-five entered the ranks of CASS/GU alumni. A high degree of communication is maintained with these students with an exchange of information regarding their activities since their return home. In July 1994, seventeen new CASS students arrived in St. Louis to participate in a similar program to train them in areas of special education. They will depart home in July 1996, many to network and join their counterparts in leadership and teaching roles in their native countries. It has been an exciting and rewarding program for the faculty who participated, the American students with whom friendships were established, and for the CASS students who brought such enthusiasm and dedication to their studies.

REFERENCES

Center for Intercultural Education and Development (1992-1994). CASS: Training Impact and Development. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University.

Correa, V. (1987). Special education in Latin America and the Caribbean. In C. Reynold & L. Mann (Eds.), Encyclopedia of Special Education: A reference for the education of handicapped and other exceptional children and adults (pp. 914-916). New York: Wiley & Sons.

Mittler, P. (1992). International visions of excellence for children with disabilities. The Council for Exceptional Children, Distinguished Lecturer Session, 70th Annual Convention, Baltimore, MY.

UNESCO (1988). Review of the present situation in special education. Paris: UNESCO.